



PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of

Tatsuo SATO

Application No.: 09/731,669 ✓

Filed: December 8, 2000 ✓

Group Art Unit: 2851

Examiner: H. Nguyen

Docket No.: 108079

#9
3/26/02
af2

For: GAS REPLACEMENT METHOD AND APPARATUS, AND
EXPOSURE METHOD AND APPARATUS

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

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In reply to the Restriction Requirement mailed February 14, 2002, Applicant
provisionally elects Group II, claims 19-35, with traverse.

It is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of all claims 1-35 is sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of any one Group of claims would encompass a search for the subject matter of the remaining claims. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the search and examination of the entire application could be made without serious burden. See MPEP §803 in which it is stated that "if the search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions" (emphasis added). It is respectfully submitted that this policy should apply in the present application in order to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to Applicants and duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

Thus, withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 14, 2002

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